

Labor and Public Employees Committee,

I am submitting testimony today as a mother with years of experience working for big-box retail companies in the Greater Bridgeport area to express my support for H.B. 5353, An Act Concerning a Fair Work Schedule - and ask you to vote in favor of this legislation.

"I'm making less this week, so I'm buying less food, so you have to eat less," is what I've had to tell my children when unexpected changes were made to my work schedule working for a big-box retail store.

While I grew up pinching pennies and only spending for what I needed, with the cost of living in our state being so high, I could never save up enough to have a savings account to fall back on.

That same employer has been known to take its time putting out the schedules. There's no reason I should come in to work on a Thursday and the schedule for the next week is still not posted.

It hinders us as worker because these companies don't want to give us full time hours. They rather hire and train new employees than give their existing employees more hours and it pits us against each other. The result of this is that retail workers must have two or three jobs that add up to full time work.

But if we don't know our schedule for the next week for one job, how can we coordinate our schedules for the other job?

This is the reality for way too many working families in Connecticut and it's shameful and unhumanitarian. This practice needs to be stopped to help Connecticut workers and their families.

At the end of the day, we just want to have balanced and predictable schedules so we can pay our bills and have time to spend with family and live our lives. Don't all humans deserve that?

Despite the false narrative created in American society about the working poor, we are *hardworking* people. As a Black woman, I strongly believe no one should be treated as slaves by their employers and that's exactly what it feels like when you are expected to allow them to run your entire life schedule.

Jobs should be a source of stability and opportunity - and workers deserve to be treated with respect.

H.B. 5353 will put an end to these practices, ensuring that more than 140,000 retail, food service, and hotel workers have more predictable schedules and reliable paychecks. The bill will give part-time employees the opportunity to work more hours, requiring employers to offer

extra shifts to current workers before hiring additional staff. More than anything, it will ensure that employers treat their employees with respect, setting their schedules in advance and providing compensation for any late changes.

Connecticut families have waited long enough. I strongly urge you to support H.B. 5353, the Fair Workweek bill, this session.

May God bless you and guide you.

Sincerely,
JoAnn
Bridgeport